



County of Fairfax, Virginia

NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release
February 11, 2011**

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Letter to the Editor

On February 8, 2011, at a regular meeting of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, along with Supervisor Penny Gross, I moved that our Board direct County staff to engage Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) and community organizations in a discussion about how to help students and parents turn a FCPS disciplinary action into a learning experience. I believe that County and Schools working together, along with other community resources, can better help a student understand that while there are serious consequences to infractions of school rules, we are there as a community to help the student cope with the emotional response that may follow and provide an appropriate level of support for both the child and the family. Disciplinary situations, if handled compassionately, can help a child develop a balanced understanding that should ultimately down the road translate into a mature, responsible adult. Lessons can be painful, but they need not result in either the child or family feeling alone in their ability to examine and address the situation, or see a path to a hopeful future. I believe we can, working together as county government, schools and community, do a better job at that than we have done in the recent past.

I am not seeking for the Board of Supervisors to commandeer the FCPS disciplinary process; that is not our role. But as with so many other aspects of the Board of Supervisor and FCPS partnership, the Board of Supervisors provides, supplements, or augments services outside of the \$1.77 billion transfer to FCPS. In addition to the direct transfer, the County's FY 2011 budget provided nearly \$55.8 million in additional support for programs such as the Comprehensive Services Act (CSA), Head Start, School-Age Child Care (SACC), public health nurses and school health aides, School Resource Officers and school crossing guards, field maintenance, afterschool programming in middle schools, and services offered by the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, including mental health and substance abuse prevention and intervention in the schools.

Clearly there is a role for Fairfax County Government in the development and safety of students in Fairfax County Public Schools. We demonstrated in the past how well we can work together when we created our joint county-school-community based organization, Fairfax Partnership for Youth. We need to have a discussion of how we can work together on this issue before another precious life is lost.

Supervisor Cathy Hudgins
Hunter Mill District

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